



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 9, 2010

Jeff Walter, Forest Supervisor
Ochoco National Forest
3160 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

Re: EPA Region 10 Review of the Upper Beaver Vegetation Management Project FEIS
EPA Project Number: 09-050-AFS

Dear Mr. Walter:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Upper Beaver Vegetation Management Project (CEQ Number 20100070) on the Paulina Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest, Crook County, Oregon. Our review of the FEIS was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The FEIS identifies Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative. This alternative would seek to move forested vegetation toward the historic range of variability through commercial thinning, precommercial thinning, juniper removal, hardwood restoration, and fuels treatments. A total of 16,347 acres would be treated.

In our comments on the draft EIS, EPA raised questions about the application of basal area targets in riparian areas, and the identification of the primary shade zone. We also raised questions about grazing management in the area proposed for treatment. We appreciate the additional detail included in the FEIS to address these questions. In particular, we appreciate the detail added to Figure 2-1 and the corrections made to Table 2-1. This information, along with the supporting text, provides a clear picture of the proposed riparian management activities. We remain supportive of the proposed management objectives, particularly as they relate to increasing the number of large trees, increasing late and old structure stands, and introducing large woody debris and hardwood plant species within the Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs), and we look forward to tracking the progress of this project as it moves forward.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the final EIS, and I encourage you to contact Teresa Kubo of my staff with any questions at, (503) 326-2859 or kubo.teresa@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christine B. Reichgott".

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit